

# THE LITERARY CHRONICLE

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### Review of New Books.

*The Village Minstrel, and other Poems.*

By John Clare, the Northamptonshire Peasant. 2 Vols. 12mo. pp. 427. London, 1821.

EVERY circumstance that transpires relating to the character and conduct of the Northamptonshire Peasant, tends to justify the assertion of a critic in the *Quarterly Review*, that he furnishes one of the most striking instances 'of patient and persevering talent, existing and enduring in the most forlorn and seemingly hopeless condition, that literature has at any time exhibited.' The two volumes before us, though produced under circumstances of less difficulty than his first production, have still been written at intervals snatched from the labours of husbandry, to which he is still doomed, to maintain his afflicted parents and his wife and child. It may be asked, has the knowledge of his genius and his miseries obtained nothing for him? Yes; a few noble individuals have come to his aid, —the Marquis of Exeter allows him an annuity of fifteen guineas per annum, and Earl Spencer one of ten pounds, Earl Fitzwilliam has presented him with 100*l.*; and his publishers have added another 100*l.* to it. These sums, with some smaller contributions, altogether yield him forty-five pounds a-year; a sum which, though insufficient for the support of his family, must afford him considerable relief, and for which he seems truly grateful.

When, about eighteen months ago, we noticed Clare's first work, we gave some account of his life; his struggles to obtain a smattering of education by the few halfpence which he earned by extra-labour as a plough-boy; when two months' labour were required to pay for one month's schooling; and three years of toil did nothing more for him than to enable him to read the Bible. We stated the rapture with which he hailed the purchase of Thomson's *Seasons*, the very thoughts of which produced the first effort of his muse. In the introduction to the vo-

lumes before us, there are some further interesting particulars respecting this untutored child of the muses. It was in the summer of 1817 that Clare first thought of offering a small volume of poems to the public by subscription. He consulted a printer, who told him that the expense of three hundred copies of a prospectus would cost one pound, and he set himself resolutely to work to obtain that sum. But the story is best told in his own simple words:—

"At the latter end of the year I left Casterton and went to Pickworth, a hamlet, which seems by its large stretch of old foundations and ruins to have been a town of some magnitude in past times, though it is now nothing more than a half solitude of huts, and odd farm-houses, scattered about, some furlongs asunder: the marks of the ruins may be traced two miles further, from beginning to end. Here, by hard working, day and night, I at last got my one pound saved, for the printing of the proposals, which I never lost sight of; and having written many more poems, excited by a change of scenery, and being over head and ears in love,—above all, having the most urgent propensity to scribbling, and considering my latter materials much better than my former, which no doubt was the case,—I considered myself more qualified for the undertaking: so I wrote a letter from this place immediately to Henson, of Market Deeping, wishing him to begin the proposals and address the public himself, urging that he could do it far better than I could, but his answer was that I must do it. After this, I made some attempts, but not having a fit place for doing any thing of that kind, from lodging at a public-house, and being pestered with many inconveniences, I could not suit myself by doing it immediately, so from time to time it was put off. At last I determined, good or bad, to produce something, and as we had another limekiln at Ryhall, about three miles from Pickworth, [Clare was at this time employed in lime-burning,] I often went there to work myself, where I had leisure to study over such things on my journeys of going and returning. On these walks, morning and night, I have dropped down, five or six times, to plan an Address, &c. In one of these musings, my prose thoughts lost themselves in rhyme. Taking a view, as

I sat beneath the shelter of a woodland hedge, of my parents' distresses at home, of my labouring so hard and so vainly to get out of debt, and of my still added perplexities of ill-timed love,—striving to remedy all, and all to no purpose,—I burst out into an exclamation of distress, "What is life!" and instantly recollecting that such a subject would be a good one for a poem, I hastily scrawled down the two first verses of it, as it stands, as the beginning of the plan which I intended to adopt, and continued my journey to work. But when I got to the kiln I could not work for thinking about what I had so long been trying at; so I sat me down on a lime-skuttle, and out with my pencil for an address of some sort, which, good or bad, I determined to send off that day; and for that purpose, when it was finished, I started to Stamford with it, about three miles off: still, along the road, I was in a hundred minds whether I should throw up all thoughts about the matter, or stay till a fitter opportunity, to have the advice of some friend or other; but, on turning it over in my mind again, a second thought informed me that I had no friend; I was turned adrift on the broad ocean of life, and must either sink or swim: so I weighed matters on both sides, and fancied, let what bad would come, it could but balance with the former: if my hopes of the poems failed, I should not be a pin worse than usual; I could but work then as I did already: nay, I considered that I should reap benefit from the disappointment; the downfall of my hopes would free my mind, and let me know that I had nothing to trust to but work. So with this favourable idea I pursued my intention, dropping down on a stone-heap before I entered the town, to give it a second reading, and correct what I thought amiss."

In the prospectus, a copy of which is inserted in the introduction, Clare proposed publishing his poems at three shillings and sixpence, if three hundred subscribers could be obtained; he wrote a modest address to the public, and inserted his sonnet to the Setting Sun, printed in the former collection. All his Prospectuses were distributed, but, alas! he could only obtain the names of seven subscribers. One of these subscribers, however, was the means of recommending Clare to better patrons, and had the honour of

first introducing his talents to the knowledge of the world.

When we saw two new volumes of poems, by Clare, announced, within so short a period since his first collection was published, we acknowledge we were afraid that his friends were drawing too freely on his genius, and forcing him before the public somewhat too hastily; we must, however, confess, that this is not the case, and numerous as are the pieces in these volumes, there are scarcely any that we would have wished to be withheld. The whole of these poems, with the exception of about a dozen pieces (some of which are his earliest productions), have been written since his former volume went to press. The principal poem, the 'Village Minstrel,' was begun in the autumn of 1819, and finished soon after the former volume made its appearance. Clare is himself the hero of his poem, and paints, with glowing vigour, the misery in which he then was, and his anxiety for his future fate. It is a fine picture of rural life, and the author luxuriates in his love of natural objects and his description of rustic sports and village scenes, notwithstanding the melancholy reflections and forebodings with which they are accompanied. A few stanzas will justify our remark. The author is describing his own feelings and character:—

'And dear to him the rural sports of May,  
When each cot-threshold mounts its hailing bough,  
And ruddy milk-maids weave their garlands gay,  
Upon the green to crown the earliest cow;  
When mirth and pleasure wear a joyful brow,  
And join the tumult with unbounded glee  
The humble tenants of the pail and plough:  
He lov'd "old sports," by them reviv'd, to see,  
But never car'd to join in their rude revelry.

'O'er brook-banks stretching, on the pasture-sward  
He gaz'd, far distant from the jocund crew;  
'Twas but their feats that claim'd a slight regard;  
'Twas his, his pastimes lonely to pursue—  
Wild blossoms creeping in the grass to view,  
Scarce peeping up the tiny bent as high,  
Beting'd with glossy yellow, red, or blue,  
Unnam'd, unnoticed but by Lubin's eye,  
That like low genius sprang to bloom their day and die.

'O who can tell the sweets of May-day's morn;  
To waken rapture in a feeling mind,  
When the gilt east unveils her dappled dawn,  
And the gay woodlark has its nest resign'd  
As slow the sun creeps up the hill behind;  
Morn redd'ning round, and daylight's spotless hue,  
As seemingly with rose and lily lin'd;

While all the prospect round beams fair to view,  
Like a sweet opening flower with its unsullied dew.

'Ah, often brushing through the dripping grass,  
Has he been seen to catch this early charm,  
List'nig the "love song" of the healthy lass  
Passing with milk-pail on her well-turn'd arm;  
Or meeting objects from the rousing farm;  
The jingling plough-teams driving down the steep,  
Waggon and cart — and shepherd-dogs' alarm,  
Raising the bleatings of unfolding sheep,  
As o'er the mountain top the red sun 'gins to peep.

'Nor could the day's decline escape his gaze;  
He lov'd the closing as the rising day,  
And oft would stand to catch the setting rays,

Whose last beams stole not unperceiv'd away;  
When, hesitating like a stag at bay,  
The bright unwearied sun seem'd loth to drop,  
Till chaos' night-hounds hurried him away,  
And drove him headlong from the mountain-top,  
And shut the lovely scene, and bade all nature stop.'

\* \* \* \* \*

'It might be curious here to hint the lad,  
How in his earliest days he did appear;  
Mean was the dress in which the boy was clad,  
His friends so poor, and clothes excessive dear,  
They oft were foil'd to rig him once a year;  
And housewife's care in many a patch was seen;

Much industry 'gainst want did persevere:  
His friends tried all to keep him neat and clean,

Though care has often fail'd, and shatter'd he has been.

'Yet oft fair prospects cheer'd his parent's dreams,  
Who had on Lubin founded many a joy;  
But pinching want soon baffled all their schemes,  
And dragg'd him from the school a hopeless boy,  
To shrink unheeded under hard employ;  
When struggling efforts warm'd him up the while,  
To keep the little toil could not destroy;  
And oft with books spare hours he would beguile,  
And blunder oft with joy round Crusoe's lonely isle.'

The description of harvest home—its sports—the amusements of the village feast, are full of truth and nature, and intermingled with passages of great beauty and the most delicate sentiment; of which the following is a pleasing instance:—

'O rural love! as spotless as the dove's;  
No wealth gives fuel to a borrow'd flame,  
To prompt the shepherd where to choose his loves,  
And go a forger of that sacred name;  
Both hearts in unison here beat the same;  
Here nature makes the choice which love inspires:

Far from the wedded lord and haughty dame  
This boon of heavenly happiness retires,  
Not felon-like law-bound, but wedded in desires.'

There is much force in the author's lament for those restraints, which the hands of power are putting on the pleasures of the humble peasant; he contrasts, with much feeling and regret, the state of the village green ere—

'— civil wars 'gainst nature's peace combin'd,  
And desolation struck her deadly blows,  
With its appearance,—  
When ploughs destroy'd the green, when groves of willows fell.'

But he shall speak for himself:—

'There once were springs, when daisies' silver studs

Like sheets of snow on every pasture spread;  
There once were summers, when the crow-flower buds

Like golden sunbeams brightest lustre shed;  
And trees grew once that shelter'd Lubin's head;

There once were brooks sweet whimpering down the vale:

The brooks no more—kingcup and daisy fled;

Their last fallen tree the naked moors bewail,  
And scarce a bush is left to tell the mournful tale.

'Yon shaggy tufts, and many a rushy knot  
Existing still in spite of spade and plough,  
As seeming fond and loth to leave the spot,  
Tell where was once the green—brown fallows now,

Where Lubin often turns a sadden'd brow,  
Marks the stopt brook, and mourns oppression's power;

And thinks how once he waded in each slough,

To crop the yellow "horse-blob's" early flower,

Or catch the "miller's-thumb" in summer's sultry hour.

'There once were days, the woodman knows it well,

When shades e'en echoed with the singing thrush;

There once were hours, the ploughman's tale can tell,

When morning's beauty wore its earliest blush.

How woodlarks carol'd from each stumpy bush;

Lubin himself has mark'd them soar and sing:

The thorns are gone, the woodlark's song is hush,

Spring more resembles winter now than spring,

The shades are banish'd all—the birds have took to wing.

There once were lanes in nature's freedom dropt,

There once were paths that every valley wound,—

Inclosure came, and every path was stopt;  
Each tyrant fix'd his sign where paths were found,

To hint a trespass now who cross'd the ground:

Justice is made to speak as they command;  
The high road now must be each stinted bound;—

Inclosure, thou'rt a curse upon the land,  
And tasteless was the wretch who thy existence  
piann'd.

'O England! boasted land of liberty,  
With strangers still thou may'st thy title  
own,  
But thy poor slaves the alteration see,  
With many a loss to them the truth is known:  
Like emigrating bird thy freedom's flown;  
While mongrel clowns, low as their rooting  
plough,  
Disdain thy laws to put in force their own;  
And every village owas its tyrants now,  
And parish slaves must live as parish kings al-  
low.'

This is the last extract which we shall make from the 'Village Minstrel,' a poem which of itself would justify all the praise that has been bestowed on John Clare, who, in vivid descriptions of rural scenery, in originality of observation and strength of feeling, richness of style and delicacy of sentiment, may rank with the best of poets of the day, though a humble and untutored peasant.

Among the minor poems in these volumes, we have been much pleased with 'Autumn,' 'Cowper Green,' 'Song of Praise,' and some of the pastorals, a style in which Clare would have been successful, had he not abandoned it early in his poetic career. The songs and sonnets are many of them very pretty, and some of them possess considerable merit. We shall enrich our present article with a few of these pieces. The first is a sweet ballad:—

'I love thee, sweet Mary, but love thee in fear;  
Wert thou but the morning breeze, healthy and  
airy,  
As thou goest a walking I'd breathe in thine  
ear,  
And whisper and sigh how I love thee, my  
Mary !'

'I wish but to touch thee, but wish it in vain;  
Wert thou but a streamlet, a winding so  
clearly,  
And I little globules of soft dropping rain,  
How fond would I press thy white bosom,  
my Mary !'

'I would steal a kiss, but I dare not presume;  
Wert thou but a rose in thy garden, sweet  
fairy,  
And I a bold bee for to rifle its bloom,  
A whole summer's day would I kiss thee,  
my Mary !'

'I long to be with thee, but cannot tell how;  
Wert thou but the elder that grows by thy  
dairy,  
And I the blest woodbine to twine on the  
bough,  
I'd embrace thee and cling to thee ever, my  
Mary !'

#### SONG.

'There was a time when love's young flowers  
With many a joy my bosom prest;  
Sweet hours of bliss!—but short are hours,  
Those hours are fled—and I'm distrest.  
I would not wish, in reason's spite;  
I would not wish new joy to gain;  
I only wish for one delight,—  
To see those hours of bliss again.'

'There was a day when love was young,  
And nought but bliss did there belong;  
When blackbirds nestling o'er us sung,  
Ah me! what sweetness wak'd his song,  
I wish not springs for ever fled;  
I wish not birds' forgotten strain;  
I only wish for feelings dead  
To warm and wake, and feel again.

'But ah! what once was joy is past;  
The time's gone by; the day and hour  
Are whirling fled on trouble's blast.  
As winter nips the summer flower.  
A shadow is but left the mind,  
Of joys that once were real to view;  
An echo only fills the wind  
With mocking sounds, that once were true.'

Though there is no species of poetry more common than the sonnet, yet there are few who succeed in it. Clare has indulged in it largely, and given us no less than sixty specimens of his talents in this species of composition, in which we think him very successful. We quote three of them:—

#### A WISH.

'Be where I may, when death brings in his  
bill,  
Demanding payment for life's ling'ring debt,  
Or in my native village nestling still,  
Or tracing scenes I've never known as yet,  
O let one wish, go where I will, be mine,—  
To turn me back and wander home to die,  
'Mong nearest friends my latest breath resign,  
And in a church-yard with my kindred lie,  
'Neath the thick-shaded sycamore's decay,  
Its broad leaves trembling to the breeze of day;  
To see its shadow o'er my ashes wave,  
How soothing will it be, while hovering near,  
My unseen spirit haunts its daisied grave,  
Pausing on scenes in life once lov'd so dear.'

#### TO TIME.

'In Fancy's eye, what an extended span,  
Time, hoary herald, has been stretch'd by  
thee:  
Vain to conceive where thy dark burst began,  
Thou birthless, boundless, vast immensity!  
Vain all conceptions of weak-minded man  
Thee to unravel from thy mystery!—  
In mortal wisdom, thou'st already ran  
A circled travel of eternity;  
Still, but a moment of thy mighty plan  
Seems yet unwound, from what thy age shall  
see,  
Consuming tyrant of all mortal kind!  
And what thou art, and what thou art to be,  
Is known to none, but that Immortal Mind  
Who reigns alone superior to thee.'

#### TO AUTUMN.

'Come, pensive Autumn, with thy clouds and  
storms,  
And falling leaves, and pastures lost to  
flowers;  
A luscious charm hangs on thy faded forms,  
More sweet than Summer in her loveliest  
hours,  
Who, in her blooming uniform of green,  
Delights with samely and continued joy:  
But give me, Autumn, where thy hand hath  
been,  
For there is wildness that can never cloy,—  
The russet hue of fields left bare, and all  
The tints of leaves and blossoms ere they fall.  
In thy dull days of clouds a pleasure comes,  
Wild music softens in thy hollow winds;  
And in thy fading woods a beauty blooms,  
That's more than dear to melancholy minds.'

With all our predilections for the first fruits of natural genius, we must admit that Clare has improved by cultivation; and though some of his earlier productions are striking from their neatness and simplicity, yet his more untaught efforts, though not deficient in this respect, have a refinement of language and a correctness of style, which give them an increased value. Should these new volumes extend the public patronage sufficiently to relieve him from that oppressive anxiety which still bears him down, we may fairly expect the poet to take a loftier and more extensive range of subject, and to add new claims to those he already possesses as a man of genius; though stronger claims to public sympathy and public support no one can present, than the poor Northamptonshire peasant; and with all the warmth of admiration for his talents, and sympathy for his miseries, we recommend him and his works to the public.

*An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants.* By John Davy, M. D., F. R. S.

(Continued from p. 610.)

ALTHOUGH the succession to the throne of Kandy was hereditary, yet it had much of the form of an elective monarchy; and the consent of the people was required before a successor could be declared. When it was publicly announced that the king was dead, which was not until his successor had been chosen,—

'A tent was pitched before the hall of audience, in which, on a piece of iron, and a basin of mixed metal, a man stood by the side of a heap of paddy, and beat the mourning tom-tom—the public signal of the event, warning the chiefs to dress themselves in black, and authorizing the people to give vent to their grief, and cry, and lament aloud.'

'Till the body of the deceased monarch was consumed, it was contrary to custom for the prince to take any refreshment. The corpse, inclosed in a coffin, was carried in a palanqueen to the Awdana-madoowe, or royal burying-ground, attended by the chiefs, their wives, and daughters. As the funeral procession moved on, two women, standing on a platform, carried by four men, threw rice over the coffin. The priests of the different temples of Boodhoo were assembled at the burying-ground, and having offered up the proper prayer for the happiness of the deceased monarch in his metempsychosis, were presented with cloths that were laid on the coffin, to be given them for discharging their pious office. The coffin was now placed in a kind of wooden cage, and was surrounded

with wood; a person broke its lid with an axe, and a relation of the deceased set fire to the pile, which was fed with oil and pitch, and sandal wood, and various perfumes. When the whole was enveloped in flame, the chiefs retired, went to the great square, and informing the prince that the body was burnt, were ordered by him to go to their houses and purify themselves.

'The mourning tom-tom was sounded, and the funeral fire was kept alive till the eleventh day, when the chiefs proceeded to the burying ground with offerings of betel, areka nut, and such articles of diet as might be presented to the king with propriety. The fire was now extinguished, by pouring on it milk and cocoa-nut water; some of the calcined bones were put into a pot or urn of earthenware, and covered and sealed, whilst the rest of the bones and ashes were collected and deposited in a grave with the presents brought for the deceased king.'

'The urn was placed on the head of a man masked, and covered all over with black, who, holding a sword in his hand, and mounted on an elephant or horse, and attended by the chiefs, proceeded to the Mahawellé ganga. At the ferry called Katagastotta, two small canoes, made of the Kakoonga, were prepared, lashed together, and covered with boughs, in the form of a bower. The masked bearer entering the canoe, was drawn towards the mid-channel of the river, by two men swimming; who, when they approached the deepest part of the stream, pushed the canoe forward and hastily retreated. Now the mask having reached the proper station, with the sword in one hand and the urn in the other, divided the urn with the sword, and in the act plunged into the stream, and diving, came up as far as possible below, and landing on the opposite side, disappeared. The canoes were allowed to float down the river; the horse or elephant was carried across, and left to graze at large, never to be used any more; and the women who threw the rice over the coffin, with the men who carried them, were also transported to the other side of the river, under the strict prohibition of re-crossing. The chiefs returned to the great square, informed the prince that the ceremony was ended, and were again ordered to purify themselves.'

Another ceremony remained to be performed before the prince could be considered completely king—that was choosing a name and putting on the regal sword, for which a fortunate day and a fortunate name were fixed by the royal astrologers. Coronation is not one of the ceremonies of the Kandyan monarchy, though a very rich crown belonged to the kings of Kandy. The marriage ceremony of the king was long, complicated, and expensive, and, as will appear by the following part of it, somewhat disgusting. The

day after the marriage rites were completed.—

'The king and queen amused themselves with throwing perfumed balls, and with squirting scented water at each other,—a diversion to which the wives of the chiefs were admitted, and of which they were allowed to partake, being quite at liberty to pelt and bespatter even royalty itself as much as they pleased. When the king was tired of the exercise, he retired to an apartment overlooking an adjoining room, in which vessels of scented water, and small copper cups were prepared for use, and in which the chiefs were assembled, only waiting for the appearance of the king, to deluge each other with sweets.'

A banquet followed in the evening, in which there were two or three hundred different kind of curries, the drink being milk, or a beverage resembling lemonade. Dancing and singing extended the feast until day-break. We pass over the account of their national festivals, which are somewhat tedious, and quote the ceremony of receiving ambassadors by the old court of Kandy:—

'The king held his court in the hall of audience, and transacted all business with his officers seated on the throne. Behind the throne there was a secret door, by which his majesty passed unobserved; and before it seven curtains, which were not drawn up till the king was seated and composed, and in perfect readiness to appear. On ordinary occasions, all the curtains were raised at once; and after the chiefs had prostrated three times, they were desired to be at their ease, which was resting on their knees, and on which, when the business was over, they left the hall backward, his majesty remaining till all had departed. On the presentation of ambassadors, extraordinary pomp and ceremony were observed. A great concourse of people was assembled; the royal elephants were drawn out; all the guards were on duty, and the approaches to the hall were illuminated. On entering the hall, the chiefs and ambassadors had to prostrate before the curtains, which were now managed with peculiar finesse: they were all suddenly drawn up, and as suddenly let down, affording, at first, only a momentary glimpse of his majesty; after a pause, they were slowly drawn up, one after another, a certain number of prostrations being required for each, till the throne was disclosed, and the king exposed to view: then the ambassador, actually crawling, was led to the foot of the throne by the ministers, walking in the most submissive attitude; and having delivered his letters, he had the troublesome task to perform of crawling backward.'

The judicial and legislative, as well as the executive power, formerly centered in the king; but all officers, from

the king downwards, exercised judicial powers, more or less; appeals laying from an inferior to a superior, till it reached the king himself, whose sentence was in all cases decisive. No one but the king had the power of passing sentence of death; for murder, it was carried into effect by hanging; but for high treason, the only capital crime besides, the sword was used instead of the halter, and the criminal was decapitated. Robbery was punished by fine, imprisonment, and flogging:—

'The crime of adultery, by the Singalese, was punished in a very summary manner. The injured husband did not institute a suit at law to recover damages; if he caught the adulterer in his house, he might beat him soundly, or even cut off his hair and ears, or have him flogged in public, and his wife flogged in the royal store-house, the place of punishment for women; after which, by his own *ipse dixit*, he might divorce her, and in disgrace send her home to her family.'

The cruel punishment for insolvency among the Singalese, forms a strange contrast to the mildness of their laws, in regard to offences. The creditor proving his debt, and the debtor acknowledging his incapacity to pay it, he and his family become slaves to the creditor, who retains them and their offspring till payment of the debt is made.

The religion of the Singalese is that of the Boodhists; they do not believe in the existence of a supreme Being, the creator and preserver of the universe, but are materialists in the strictest sense of the term. Their opinions of heaven and hell bear some affinity to those of the Hindoos, of which we gave an account in our review of Mr. Ward's valuable work in our last year's volume.

The language of Ceylon, the Singalese, is distinct and peculiar, and is considered of so much consequence, that it is almost the only subject that is studied. Very many of the natives are grammatically acquainted with it; and reading and writing are almost as general amongst the male part of the population as in England:—

'The Singalese write very neatly and expeditiously, with a sharp-pointed iron style; and they colour the characters they have scratched by nibbling them with an ink made of lampblack and a solution of gum. Their books are all manuscript, and actually formed of leaves of trees, and confined by boards. The leaf most used, as best adapted to the purpose, is the immense leaf of the talipot-plant, occasionally nearly thirty feet in circumference.'

ence. It is well and slowly dried in the shade, rubbed with an oil, and cut into pieces of suitable dimensions, the length of which always greatly exceeds the width; near the two extremities each piece is perforated, that they may be connected by means of a cord, to which the boards are also attached, to form a book. The boards are generally neatly painted and decorated. Occasionally, but rarely, their books are made of thin copper-plates.'

The subjects of their writing are various; chiefly theology, history, medicine, astrology, and poetry:—

' Almost every Singalese is more or less a poet; or at least can compose what they call poetry. Love is not their great inspiring theme, but interest;—a young Kandyan does not indite a ditty to his mistress's eyebrows; the bearded chief is the favourite of his muse, to whom he sings his petition in verse, whether it be to ask a favour or beg an indulgence. All their poetry is sung or recited; they have seven tunes by which they are modulated. Their most admired tune is called "The Horse-trot;" from the resemblance which it bears to the sound of the trotting of a horse. Of their music, which is extremely simple, they are very fond, and prefer it greatly to our's, which they say they do not understand.'

The Singalese tunes are seven in number; and they have also seven musical instruments, on which they are most commonly played; these, of which Dr. Davy has given drawings, are principally of the drum kind; there is one made of brass, somewhat like a symbol, which is beat with a stick, a second in the shape of a clarionet, and a third of the violin order.

The sciences can scarcely be said to exist among the Singalese. Of mathematics and geometry they are entirely ignorant, and even of arithmetic their knowledge is very limited. They have no figures of their own to represent numbers, and, according to their own method, they are obliged to use letters; they have lately adopted the Mala-bar or Tamul figures, with their tables of multiplication and subtraction. Their weights and measures are necessarily very defective. They are ignorant of astronomy, but greatly addicted to astrology; their knowledge of medicine is extremely superficial; of anatomy they are quite ignorant, and of chemistry their knowledge does not extend beyond distillation, which is principally used for extracting an ardent spirit from the fermented juice of the cocoa-nut tree. Their skill in pharmacy, surgery, and pathology, is in a very rude state.

In the arts, the Singalese have made more progress than in the sciences; particularly in some of the ornamental or fine arts. Of these, painting is the least advanced. They are unacquainted with perspective, or with the effect of light and shade in colouring. All their paints are mixed with gum, and of oil painting they are entirely ignorant. Lacquer painting is an art much in use among the Singalese, and of which they are very fond, and which they perform with a good deal of skill and taste. It is chiefly used to ornament bows and arrows, spears, sticks, ivory boxes, priest's screens or fans, and wooden pillars. Their lacquer is obtained from a shrub called kapitia (*crocum lacciferum*), very common in most parts of Ceylon. In statuary the Singalese have been more successful than in painting; religion affords the most common subject; and artists are instructed in their designs to three postures, the standing, sitting, and recumbent, and to the priestly costume, no one venturing the slightest innovation. The statues are always coloured. The art of casting is not behind that of sculpture, and there is now at Kandy a figure of Boodhoo, in copper, as large as life, which Dr. Davy says is so well done that it would be admired even in Europe.

In architecture the Singalese have not any peculiar or national style; but they execute work in gold and silver for jewelry with great taste and dexterity, and this with very few tools; the best artist only requiring the following:—

' A low earthen pot full of chaff or saw-dust, on which he makes a little charcoal fire; a small bamboo blow-pipe, about six inches long, with which he excites the fire; a short earthen tube or nozzle, the extremity of which is placed at the bottom of the fire, and through which the artist directs the blast of the blow-pipe; two or three small crucibles, made of the fine clay of ant-hills; a pair of tongs; an anvil; two or three small hammers; a file; and, to conclude, the last, a few small bars of iron and brass, about two inches long, differently pointed, for different kinds of work. It is astonishing what an intense little fire, more than sufficiently strong to melt silver and gold, can be kindled in a few minutes in the way just described. Such a simple portable forge deserves to be better known; it is, perhaps, even deserving the attention of the scientific experimenter, and may be useful to him when he wishes to excite a small fire, larger than can be procured by the common blow-pipe, and he has not a forge to command.'

Gardening is hardly known as an art

in Ceylon, but the inhabitants are not unskilful in agriculture.

(To be concluded in our next.)

*Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent.* By Alexander de Humboldt and Aimé Boupland.

(Concluded from p. 452)

We concluded our former notice of this valuable work with a description of the caoutchouc and the process of preparing it, and we now give an account of the Indian poison, which is fabricated at Esmeralda, a most solitary Christian mission of about eighty inhabitants, on the Upper Oronoko. This active poison is employed in war, in the chase, and, what is more singular, as a remedy for gastric obstructions. M. Humboldt says,—

' The poison of the ticunas of the Amazon, the upas-tieute of Java, and the curare of Guyana, are the most deleterious substances that are known. Raleigh, toward the end of the sixteenth century, had heard the name of *urari* pronounced as being a vegetable substance, with which arrows were envenomed; yet no fixed notions of this poison had reached Europe. The missionaries, Gumilla and Gili, had not been able to penetrate into the country where the curare is manufactured. Gumilla asserts, "that this preparation was enveloped in great mystery; that its principal ingredient was furnished by a subterraneous plant, by a tuberose root, which never puts forth leaves, and which is called the root, by way of eminence, *raiz de si misma*; that the venomous exhalations which arise from the pots, cause the old women (the most useless) to perish, who are chosen to watch over this operation; finally, that these vegetable juices never appear sufficiently concentrated, till a few drops produce, at a distance, a repulsive action on the blood. An Indian wounds himself slightly; and a dart dipped in the liquid curare is held near the wound. If it make the blood return to the vessels without having been brought into contact with them, the poison is judged to be sufficiently concentrated." I shall not stop to refute these popular tales collected by Father Gumilla.

' When we arrived at Esmeralda, the greater part of the Indians were returning from an excursion which they had made to the east, beyond the Rio Padano, to gather *juyvas*, or the fruit of the bertholletia, and the liana which yields the curare. Their return was celebrated by a festival, which is called in the mission, *la fiesta de las juyvas*, and which resembles our harvest homes and vintage feasts. The women had prepared a quantity of fermented liquor, and during two days the Indians were in a state of intoxication. Among nations that attach

great importance to the fruits of the palm-trees, and of some others useful for the nourishment of man, the period when these fruits are gathered is marked by public rejoicings, and time is divided according to these festivals, which succeed one another in a course invariably the same. We were fortunate enough to find an old Indian less drunk than the rest, who was employed in preparing the curare poison from freshly gathered plants. He was the chemist of the place. We found at his dwelling, large earthen pots for boiling the vegetable juice, shallower vessels to favour the evaporation by a larger surface, and leaves of the plaintain-tree rolled up in the shape of our filters, and used to filtrate the liquids, more or less loaded with fibrous matter. The greatest order and neatness prevailed in this hut, which was transformed into a chemical laboratory. The Indian who was to instruct us, is known throughout the mission by the name of the *master of poison*, (*amodel curare*;) he had that self-sufficient air and tone of pedantry, of which the pharmacopolists of Europe were formerly accused. "I know," said he, "that the whites have the secret of fabricating soap, and that black powder, which has the effect of making a noise, and killing animals when they are wanted. The curare, which we prepare from father to son, is superior to any thing you can make down yonder (beyond sea.) It is the juice of an herb which kills silently (without any one knowing whence the stroke comes.)"

"This chemical operation, to which the master of the curare attached so much importance, appears to us extremely simple. The liana, (*bejuco*,) which is used at Esmeralda for the preparation of the poison, bears the same name as in the forests of Javita. It is the *bejuco de mavacure*, which is gathered in abundance east of the mission, on the left bank of the Oronoko, beyond the Rio Amaguaca, in the mountainous and granitic lands of Guanaya and Yumariquin.

The juice of the liana, when it has been recently gathered, is not regarded as poisonous; perhaps it acts in a sensible manner only when it is strongly concentrated. It is the bark and a part of the alburnum which contains this terrible poison. Branches of the *mavacure*, four or five lines in diameter, are scraped with a knife: and the bark that comes off is bruised, and reduced into very thin filaments, on the stone employed for grinding cassava. The venomous juice being yellow, the whole fibrous mass takes this colour. It is thrown into a funnel nine inches high, with an opening four inches wide. This funnel was, of all the instruments of the Indian laboratory, that of which the *master of poison* seemed to be most proud. He asked us repeatedly if *por allá* (down yonder, that is in Europe,) we had ever seen any thing to be compared to his *empeudo*. It was a leaf of the plaintain tree rolled up in the form of

a cone, and placed in another stronger cone, made of the leaves of the palm-tree. The whole of this apparatus was supported by slight frame-work, made of the petioles and ribs of palm leaves. A cold infusion is first prepared by pouring water on the fibrous matter, which is the ground bark of the *mavacure*. A yellowish water filters during several hours, drop by drop, through the leafy funnel. This filtered water is the venomous liquor, but it acquires strength only when it is concentrated by evaporation, like molasses, in a large earthen pot. The Indian, from time to time, invited us to taste the liquid; its taste, more or less bitter, decides when the concentration by fire has been carried sufficiently far. There is no danger in this operation, the curare being deleterious only when it comes into immediate contact with the blood. The vapours, therefore, that are disengaged from the pans, are not hurtful, notwithstanding what has been asserted on this point by the missionaries of the Oronoko. Fontana, in his fine experiments on the poison of the *ticunas* of the river of Amazons, long ago proved, that the vapours rising from this poison, when thrown on burning charcoal, may be inhaled without apprehension; and that it is false as M. de La Condamine has announced, that Indian women, when condemned to death, have been killed by the vapours of the poison of the *ticunas*.

When the darts are touched with this juice, which is mixed with a glutinous substance, in order to make it stick, they are mortal; large birds, when wounded with one of these arrows in the thigh, perish in two or three minutes; but it is often ten or twelve before a pig or a pecari expires. Our author is not acquainted with any antidote for this poison. Among uncivilized nations, various things are resorted to for a covering, but it is the Indians of the Oronoko alone who are so amply provided for by nature, as to furnish them with shirts ready made. Mr. H. says,—

"We saw on the slope of the Cerra Duida, *shirt-trees*, fifty feet high. The Indians cut off cylindrical pieces, two feet in diameter, from which they peel the red and fibrous bark, without making any longitudinal incision. This bark affords them a sort of garment, which resembles sacks of a very coarse texture, and without a seam. The upper opening serves for the head, and two lateral holes are cut to admit the arms. The natives wear these shirts of marima in the rainy season; they have the form of the *ponchos* and *ruanas* of cotton, which are so common in New Grenada, at Quito, and in Peru. As in these climates the riches and beneficence of nature are regarded as the primary causes of the indolence of the inhabitants, the missionaries do not fail to say in showing the shirts of marima, "in the forests

of the Oronoko garments are found ready made on the trees."

In addition to the ready-made shirts, the spathes of certain palm-trees furnish pointed caps, which resemble coarse net-work. M. Humboldt refutes the ancient traditions respecting the dwarf and fair Indians said to be near the sources of the Oronoko. Proceeding down this great river, he came to the cavern of Ataruipe, which he thus describes.—

"We soon reckoned in this tomb of a whole extinct tribe near six hundred skeletons well preserved, and so regularly placed, that it would have been difficult to make an error in their number. Every skeleton reposes in a sort of basket, made of the petioles of the palm-tree. These baskets, which the natives call *mapires*, have the form of a square bag. Their size is proportioned to the age of the dead; there are some for infants cut off at the moment of their birth. We saw them from ten inches to three feet four inches long, the skeletons in them being bent together. They are all ranged near each other, and are so entire, that not a rib or a phalanx is wanting. The bones have been prepared in three different manners, either whitened in the air and the sun; dyed red with *onoto*, a colouring matter extracted from the *bixa orellana*; or, like real mummies, varnished with odoriferous resins, and enveloped in leaves of the *heliconia* or of the plaintain tree. The Indians related to us, that the fresh corpse is placed in damp ground, in order that the flesh may be consumed by degrees; some months after, it is taken out, and the flesh remaining on the bones is scraped off with sharp stones. Several hordes in Guyana still observe this custom. Earthen vases half-baked are found near the *mapires*, or baskets. They appear to contain the bones of the same family. The largest of these vases or funeral urns, are three feet high, and five feet and a-half long. Their colour is greenish grey; and their oval form is sufficiently pleasing to the eye. The handles are made in the shape of crocodiles or serpents; the edge is bordered with meanders, labyrinths, and real *grecques*, in straight lines variously combined. Such paintings are found in every zone, among nations the most remote from each other, either with respect to the spot which they occupy on the globe, or to the degree of civilization which they have attained. The inhabitants of the little mission of Maypures, still execute them on their commonest pottery; they decorate the bucklers of the *Otaheitans*, the fishing implements of the *Eskimos*, the walls of the Mexican Palace of Mitla, and the vases of ancient Greece. Every where a rhythmic repetition of the same forms flattens the eye, as the condensed repetition of sounds soothes the ear. Analogies founded on the internal nature of our feelings,

on the natural dispositions of our intellect, are not calculated to throw light on the filiation and the ancient connections of nations.

We could not acquire any precise idea of the period to which the origin of the *mapires* and the painted vases, contained in the ossuary cavern of Ataruipe, can be traced. The greater part seemed not to be more than a century old; but it may be supposed, that, sheltered from all humidity, under the influence of a uniform temperature, the preservation of these articles would be no less perfect if it dated from a period far more remote. A tradition circulates among the Guahiboes, that the warlike Atures, pursued by the Caribbees, escaped to the rocks that rise in the middle of the great cataracts; and there that nation, heretofore so numerous, became gradually extinct, as well as its language. The last family of the Atures still existed in 1767, in the time of the missionary Gili. At the period of our voyage, an old parrot was shown at Maypures, of which the inhabitants related, and the fact is worthy of observation, that, "they did not understand what it said, because it spoke the language of the Atures."

M. Humboldt and his companion opened several of these *mapires* or baskets, in order to examine attentively the form of the skulls, all of which displayed the characteristics of the American race, except two or three which approached to the Caucasian. Our travellers having some of the skulls and skeletons, loaded a mule with them, but, says M. H.—

Unfortunately for us, the penetration of the Indians, and the extreme quickness of their senses, rendered all our precautions useless. Wherever we stopped, in the missions of the Caribbees, amid the Llanos, between Angostura and Nueva Barcelona, the natives assembled round our mules to admire the monkeys which we had purchased at Oroonoko. These good people had scarcely touched our baggage, when they announced the approaching death of the beast of burden, "that carried the dead." In vain we told them that they were deceived in their conjectures, and that the baskets contained the bones of crocodiles and manatees; they persisted in repeating, that they smelt the resin that surrounded the skeletons, and "that they were their old relations." We were obliged to make the monks interpose their authority, in order to conquer the aversion of the natives, and procure for us a change of mules.

One of the skulls, which we took from the cavern of Ataruipe, has appeared in the fine work published by my old master, Blumenbach, on the varieties of the human species. The skeletons of the Indians were lost on the coast of Africa, together with a considerable part of our collections, in a shipwreck, in which perished our friend and fellow-traveller,

Fray Juan Gonzales, a young monk of the order of St. Francis.

We withdrew in silence from the cavern of Ataruipe. It was one of those calm and serene nights, which are so common in the torrid zone. The stars shone with a mild and planetary light. Their scintillation was scarcely sensible at the horizon, which seemed illumined by the great nebulae of the southern hemisphere. An innumerable multitude of insects spread a reddish light on the ground, loaded with plants, and resplendent with these living and moving fires, as if the stars of the firmament had sunk down on the Savannah. On quitting the cavern, we stopped several times to admire the beauty of this singular scene. The odorous vanilla, and festoons of bignonia, decorated the entrance; and above, on the summit of the hill, the arrowy branches of the palm-trees waved murmuring in the air.'

M. Humboldt has some very curious observations on the earth-eaters, which are not only to be found on the Oroonoko, but among the negroes on the coast of Guinea, the savage inhabitants of New Caledonia, in the Pacific Ocean, and the Javanese. We shall, however, only quote the facts as they relate to the Otomacs of the Oroonoko:—

The inhabitants of Uruana belong to those nations of the savannahs, (*Indios andantes*), who, more difficult to civilize than the nations of the forest, (*Indios del monte*), have a decided aversion to cultivate the land, and live almost exclusively on hunting and fishing. They are men of a very robust constitution; but ugly, savage, vindictive, and passionately fond of fermented liquors. They are omnivorous animals in the highest degree; and, therefore, the other Indians, who consider them as barbarians, have a common saying, "nothing is so disgusting that an Otomac will not eat it." While the waters of the Oroonoko and its tributary streams are low, the Otomacs subsist on fish and turtles. The former they kill with surprising dexterity, by shooting them with an arrow, when they appear at the surface of the water. When the rivers swell, which in South America, as well as in Egypt and Nubia, is erroneously attributed to the melting of the snows, and which occurs periodically in every part of the torrid zone, fishing almost entirely ceases. It is then as difficult to procure fish in the rivers which are become deeper, as when you are sailing on the open sea. It often fails the poor missionaries, on fast-days as well as flesh-days, though all the young Indians are under the obligation of "fishing for the convent." At the period of these inundations, which last two or three months, the Otomacs swallow a prodigious quantity of earth. We found heaps of balls in their huts, piled up in pyramids three or

four feet high. These balls were five or six inches in diameter. The earth which the Otomacs eat is a very fine and unctuous clay, of a yellowish grey colour; and, being slightly baked in the fire, the hardened crust has a tint inclining to red, owing to the oxide of iron which is mingled with it. We brought away some of this earth, which we took from the winter provision of the Indians; and it is absolutely false that it is steatitic, and contains magnesia. Mr. Vauquelin did not discover any traces of this earth in it; but he found that it contained more silex than alumine, and three or four per cent. of lime.

The Otomacs do not eat every kind of clay indifferently; they choose the alluvial beds, or strata that contain the most unctuous earth, and the smoothest to the feel. I inquired of the missionary, whether the moistened clay were made to undergo, as Father Gunilla asserts, that peculiar decomposition, which is indicated by a disengagement of carbonic acid and sulphuretted hydrogen, and which is designated in every language by the term of *putrefaction*; but he assured us, that the natives neither cause the clay to rot, nor do they mingle it with flour of maize, oil of turtle's eggs, or fat of the crocodile. We ourselves examined, both at the Oroonoko and after our return to Paris, the balls of earth which we brought away with us, and found no trace of the mixture of any organic substance, whether oily or farinaceous. The savage regards every thing as nourishing that appeases hunger; when, therefore, you inquire of an Otomac on what he subsists during the two months when the river is the highest, he shows you his balls of clayey earth. This he calls his principal food; for at this period he can seldom procure a lizard, a root of fern, or a *dead fish swimming* at the surface of the water. If the Indian eat earth from want during two months, (and from three quarters to five quarters of a pound in twenty-four hours,) he does not the less regale himself with it during the rest of the year. Every day in the season of drought, when fishing is most abundant, he scrapes his balls of *poya*, and mingles a little clay with his other aliment. What is most surprising is, that the Otomacs do not become lean by swallowing such quantities of earth; they are, on the contrary, extremely robust, and far from having the belly tense and puffed up. The missionary, Fray Ramon Bueno, asserts, that he never remarked any alteration in the health of the natives at the period of the great risings of the Oroonoko.

The following are the facts, in all their simplicity, which we are able to verify. The Otomacs, during some months, eat daily three quarters of a pound of clay, slightly hardened by fire, without their health being sensibly affected by it. They moisten the earth afresh when they are going to swallow it. It has not been possible to verify, hitherto, with precision, how much nutritious vegetable or animal

matter the Indians take in a week at the same time; but it is certain that they attribute the sensation of satiety which they feel, to the clay, and not to the wretched aliments which they take with it occasionally. No physiological phenomenon being entirely insulated, it may be interesting to examine several analogous phenomena which I have been able to collect.

I observed every where within the torrid zone, in a great number of individuals, children, women, and sometimes even full-grown men, an inordinate and almost irresistible desire of swallowing earth; not an alkaline or calcareous earth, to neutralize, (as it is vulgarly said,) acid juices, but a fat clay, unctuous and exhaling a strong smell. It is often found necessary to tie the childrens' hands, or to confine them, to prevent their eating earth, when the rain ceases to fall. At the village of Banco, on the bank of the river Magdalena, I saw the Indian women who make pottery, continually swallowing great pieces of clay.'

From various experiments that have been made by M. Humboldt, as well as other physiologists, it is found that there are some species of earths which may be taken in considerable quantities without injury to the health; and that although the Otomacs in America, and the inhabitants of New Caledonia, eat earth from want and to appease hunger, there are tribes in other countries that eat it from choice.

M. Humboldt is an author so deservedly popular, and his works are so highly interesting, that to recommend it is only necessary to quote them. This we have already done, and we now take our leave.

#### THE WILD ASS\*.

The sun was just rising over the summits of the eastern mountains, when my greyhound, Cooley, suddenly darted off in pursuit of an animal, which my Persians said, from the glimpse they had of it, was an antelope. I instantly put spurs to my horse, and, followed by Sedak Beg and Mehmander, followed the chase. After an unrelaxed gallop of full three miles, we came up with the dog, who was then within a short stretch of the creature he pursued; and, to my surprise, and at first vexation, I saw it to be an ass. But, on a moment's reflection, judging from its fleetness it must be a wild one, a species little known in Europe, but which the Persians prize above all

\* From Sir Robert Ker Porter's Travels in Persia.

other animals as an object of chase, I determined to approach as near to it as the very swift Arab I was on would carry me. But the single instant of checking my horse to consider, had given our game such a head of us, that, notwithstanding all our speed, we could not recover our ground on him. I, however, happened to be considerably before my companions, when, at a certain distance, the animal in its turn made a pause, and allowed me to approach within pistol-shot of him. He then darted off again with the quickness of thought; capering, kicking, and sporting in his flight, as if he were not blown in the least, and the chase were his pastime.

He appeared to me about ten or twelve hands high; the skin smooth, like a deer's, and of a reddish colour; the belly and hinder parts partaking of silvery grey; his neck was finer than that of a common ass, being longer, and bending like a stag's, and his legs beautifully slender; the head and ears seemed large in proportion to the gracefulness of these forms, and by them I first recognized that the object of my chase was of the ass tribe. The mane was short and black, as was also a tuft which terminated his tail. No line whatever ran along his back or crossed his shoulders, as are seen on the tame species with us. When my followers of the country came up, they regretted I had not shot the creature when he was so within my aim, telling me his flesh is one of the greatest delicacies in Persia; but it would not have been to eat him that I should have been glad to have had him in my possession. The prodigious swiftness and peculiar manner with which he fled across the plain, coincided exactly with the description that Xenophon gives of the same animal in Arabia, (vide Anabasis, b. 1.) But, above all, it reminded me of the striking portrait drawn by the author of the book of Job. I shall venture to repeat it, since the words will give life and action to the sketch that is to accompany these pages.

'Who hath loosed the bonds of the wild ass? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings! He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountain is his pasture.'

I was informed by the Mehmander, who had been in the desert when making a pilgrimage to the shrine of Ali, that the wild ass of Irak Arabi differs in nothing from the one I had just seen.

He had observed them often, for a short time, in the possession of the Arabs, who told him the creature was perfectly untameable. A few days after this discussion, we saw another of these animals, and, pursuing it determinately, had the good fortune, after a hard chase, to kill it and bring it to our quarters. From it I completed my sketch. The Honourable Mount-stuart Elphinstone, in his most admirable account of the kingdom of Cabul, mentions this highly picturesque creature, under the name of Goorkhur; describing it as an inhabitant of the desert between India and Afghanistan, or Caubul. It is called gour by the Persians, and is usually seen in herds, though often single, straying away, as the one I first saw, in the wantonness of liberty. By the national passion for hunting so wild an object, Persia lost one of its most estimable monarchs, Bahram, surnamed Gour, from his fondness for the sport, and general success in the pursuit of an animal almost as fleet as the wind. The scene of this chase was a fine open vale, near to Shiraz, but which had the inconvenience of being intersected by a variety of springs, forming themselves into exceedingly deep ponds, caverned at the bottom, by nature, to an extent under ground not to be traced. While the King was in the heat of pursuit, his horse came suddenly to the brink of one of these pieces of water, and, tumbling headlong, both horse and rider disappeared. The pond was immediately explored to the utmost of their ability in those days, but the body of the King could not be found. Hence it is supposed that it must have been driven by the stream into one of the subterraneous channels, and there found a watery grave. This event happened fourteen hundred years ago, and it yet forms an interesting tale in the memories of the natives about, to relate to the traveller passing that way.

#### Original Communications.

CRITIQUE ON  
SIR WALTER SCOTT'S REMARKS  
ON NOVELISTS AND DRAMATISTS.  
(FOR THE LITERARY CHRONICLE.)  
(Concluded from p. 616.)

I HAVE now laid before the reader the whole of this critic's reasoning, and, as I think, sufficiently proved its fallacy and inconclusiveness. I am, indeed, astonished that the learned editor himself did not feel he was treading on

false ground, for if he had ever paid due attention to his own words, he would have perceived them constantly betraying uncertainty and contradiction. One of his sentences runs thus: ‘It *must*, therefore, frequently happen that the author best qualified for a province in which all depends on the communication of his own ideas and feelings to the reader, without any intervening medium, *may* fall short.’ Now, does not the evident incongruity of the words *must* and *may*, show that the writer had no clear notions of what he was endeavouring to prove? if the premises from whence he drew this tremulous conclusion, had any thing of energy and fixedness in them, instead of allowing it to vacillate between certainty and possibility, he would have boldly said, *shall* or *will*, and not *may*; but they had no such force, and, therefore, he found himself obliged to put us off with this lame account of the matter, that a novelist *may* not be a good dramatist, which nobody disputed. Again, he says, speaking of an *acting drama* written in the manner of a novel, ‘there is an immediate failure, though it *may* be the failure of a man of genius.’ Would not one have thought this was sufficient to have shown him, he was labouring to prove what was nothing to the purpose? for Fielding’s plays are not what can be called honourable failures, which he speaks of above; they are utterly bad, and this is the phenomenon to be accounted for. But, in order to show that his whole manner of reasoning tends to prove the very opposite of what he wished, though he was not conscious of it, let the reader look at the following sentences. After having enumerated several qualifications which the novelist and dramatist must possess in common, and which appear to comprehend the sum of those necessary in both their arts, he says, ‘he (i. e. the novelist) must not only tell what the characters actually said, *in which his task is the same as that of the dramatic author.*’ Hence a good acting play may be made by selecting a plot and characters from a novel, by contracting the events within the space necessary for representation, and by discarding from the dialogue whatever is redundant.’ Now, here we have his own words, that the novelist has all the requisites for a dramatist, that one department of the former is to do what includes the whole art of the latter, viz. ‘to tell what the characters actually said,’ and that a well-educated tai-

lor might cut out a play from a novel, yet we find him concluding from all this, that a novelist is no dramatist! Is it not a natural question, why the novelist himself might not lop off the redundancies and select the characters, as well as the tailor, and so give us a good play? unless, perhaps, the editor may set about proving, in the face of our milliners, that a writer of novels cannot handle a pair of scissars.

But the solution of this latter phenomenon, that an able critic and author should fall into such contradictions and absurdities, which is to the full as wonderful as the former, is that he treated his subject as he would his mistress, as a trifle to play elegant tricks upon, to mumble sweet phrases over, and to keep him in poetical wind. It is impossible, but that if he had taken the pains to look through the tinsel and drapery of his language, at the inward substance of his arguments, he would have seen their weakness and instability. This, however, would be too much to expect in this age of wordy literature, where the ghost of an argument is scarcely to be detected amidst the clouds and confusion of magnificent sesquipedals, headlong metaphors, and images swoln out of all natural figure.

Let me not be accused of an envious wish to detract from the gratefulness of good language, because I may be deficient in it myself; sound has its sense to please, as well as argument its faculty. Neither do I object to the introduction of poetical language into subjects, whose objects are professedly philosophical;—but this I object to: the utter disregard of every thing but fine words; or if we do admit something bordering upon reason into our compositions, making it mere wire or cat-gut to hold the fringe together. What I require is merely this: that before he adjusts his ornaments, the argumentator would make a clean draught of the line of his argument, that he may know where he is going, and then he may paint it in what colour he pleases, so as he leaves it visible to his followers; but it is a contemptible office, a kind of dressing of the dead, to spend our time in heaping a profusion of flowers and beautiful weeds on a senseless counterfeit of real energy.

I have devoted the chief part of this essay to the demonstration of the falsity of a particular theory; but whether the editor’s account of the phenomenon be true or not, is a secondary consideration. I come not for the invidi-

ous purpose of detecting the errors of a man so much my superior in mental qualifications, but to show the dangerous tendency of the present rage for voluble eloquence: this makes a man of sense and abilities, involve and bewilder himself in most palpable contradictions; this makes a coxcomb, whose sagacity ends where reason begins, viz. at the extremity of animal instinct, provided he can fill his own mouth and our ears with grammatical breath and sorrows, pass for a man of genius and wisdom amongst us, when his proper office should be, making wooden cuckoos or whistle trumpets, for children and idiots.

With this warning before our eyes, let us now turn to the investigation of the question itself. It is much easier to overturn a theory, than to establish one permanently, and, therefore, though I am pretty certain the above solution of the proposed phenomenon is not the true one, I am by no means as sure, that that I am about offering, may not meet similar treatment from some abler inquisitor, which, however, I by no means deprecate, but on the contrary request, as I had much rather be convicted of an error than remain in it. I shall also have the satisfaction of knowing, that if I do fail, it is not for want of using all diligence to prevent it; that I attempted the question with a serious design to solve it, and for no latent purpose, such as carrying off the wits of my readers on the current of my voluminous fluency, or stupifying them with a breathless succession of fleeting imagery. I attempt it for itself, else I would not attempt it at all. If my object was only to expose my poetical faculties, I would keep to poetical subjects.

The primary error in the theory we have just overturned, seems to me to lie in the attributing the cause of the phenomenon to habit. This was the first principle the editor set out with, though by a poetical licence (which I suppose means, a neglect of every thing like reason and propriety) he leaves the connexion between it and the arguments he has brought to prove it, as difficult to be made out as the phenomenon itself. Indeed, he says no more about it, but having first made it the head of his hypothesis, and given us a few disjointed members to clap up a body, he has left it to us to make it a tail. But as the head and tail of an hypothesis are the same thing, namely, the hypothesis itself, and as the members are the arguments which

support it, I suppose if we can knock the hypothesis on the head, we may send the tail, &c. a-begging. Now, what is the fact? Fielding wrote his novels *after* his plays; so that the habit of writing in the style of a novel, could have no effect on his plays, which were written already. Is it not singular the biographical critic should never have considered this, though he mentions it a few lines afterwards? but, poetry, all along of poetry! it is impossible to see a plain matter of fact through the mist which a poetical fancy casts before the mind. But, though this alone puts the hypothesis to flight without farther trouble, the reader may like to see a speculative proof of the same thing. To this end, I will beg leave to introduce a rule invented by Sir Isaac Newton, to my reader's notice, which, although used heretofore only in purely scientific subjects, may yet be applied here with great propriety and effect. It is this: *no cause of any phenomenon is to be admitted, but what is true, and sufficient to account for the phenomenon.* Now, though in the present case, the truth, i.e. the existence, of habit as an efficient cause to work many wonders, cannot be denied, yet it is wholly insufficient; which is plain from what I have brought forward above, concerning the habit of imagining and describing.

We must look to a more remote cause for this phenomenon, than habit. And to me it appears to be this. There are some men of a vast and magnificent turn of mind, who cannot bring themselves to dwell upon any thing minute or particular. On the other hand, there are those of an accurate and curious disposition, who delight in examining closely the several differences and particles of things, and have no capacity of taking in general views. Now, according to my notion, a dramatist is of the former class, a novelist of the latter; and this not only accounts thus simply for the proposed question, but also for another, viz. why a dramatist would most probably fail in a novel; which is a conjecture of mine I leave to be determined by experience. For, a dramatist is obliged, by the necessity of contracting his work to the measure of a few pages, to develope his characters in the great, to let us into their dispositions and designs immediately; consequently, he must choose their prominent and decisive characteristics, and by a general and comprehensive

view of his subject, give us a determinate outline at once. On the contrary, a novelist has what waste of paper he chooses to travel over, and, therefore, we expect a minute account of every thing; consequently, he works by piecemeal, he makes out his characters by little and little, and by exhibiting all the individual traits of his personages, gives us at last a finished and accurate picture of them. If this be the case, the man of the first class, which contains those of a vast and comprehensive mind, will succeed in the drama, and fail in a novel on account of his deficiency in minute knowledge; on the other hand, the man of the second class, which contains those of an accurate and curious disposition, will succeed in a novel, and fail in the drama on account of his deficiency in seizing general points, and developing instantaneously. Hence we see that the faculties of description and imagination, which otherwise would make the novelist a dramatist, are rendered useless by this deficiency.

The only difficulty I can see in this theory is the following: how does it agree with the fact that Cervantes and Scott, two of our greatest novelists, are yet authors of most comprehensive and stupendous imaginations, especially the latter? I answer; we must distinguish between a novelist and romancer; besides it is the querist's assertion, not mine, that all men of genius are of one or other class above-mentioned. There may be men who have both a comprehensive and an accurate genius, though, perhaps, not of the first degree in either, and such would write a drama as well as a novel. A novel then seems to be distinguished from a romance in this, that the former is a narration of what men might probably say and do in life, the latter of what would not probably happen, and hence the author of a romance should have a noble imagination and somewhat dramatical, as the language of a romance is above the common-place strain of a novel. But it will be said, which is Cervantes, a novelist or a romancer? which is Scott? This is the very point I want to come to. I answer, both. As far as they relate things probable they are novelists. As far as they relate things not probable they are romancers. And mark how well this agrees with my theory: this mixture of novel and romance shows a genius in the author at once accurate and comprehensive; therefore he belongs to both the above classes; there-

fore he should write a good play as well as a good novel; and what is the fact? Cervantes was a dramatist considerably above mediocrity, and I have as little doubt that the author of the Scotch novels is the writer of those excellent dramatical mottoes he has prefixed to his chapters, as that Scott is the author of the novels themselves.

However this may be, let the author of these novels, whoever he is, attempt a drama, either tragedy or comedy, and if he fails, I am content to give up my theory, and, what is more, to embrace that I have just overturned!

CALAMUS.

#### CROSS READINGS.

*To the Editor of the Literary Chronicle.*

SIR,—Your readers will recollect the amusing articles under the titles of 'Cross Readings, Ship News, and Mistakes of the Press,' and they will doubtless be delighted to discover a new source of amusement of this kind; it will cost them no trouble, which is always a great drawback on pleasure: they have only to take Levizac's Grammar and read the exercises exactly as they are printed: as a specimen, I will give you one taken at random.

'Was not Virgil born at Mantua? it is from that poisoned source that have arisen all the cruel wars that have desolated the universe; the fable says, that as soon as Hercules had cut off the heads of the hydra, others sprang up, while their united flocks fed on the tender and flowery grass.'—Exercises on the verb *naitre*, p. 193, Paris Edition.

No Quiz.

#### THE NEW CHURCH OF ST. PANCRAS.

*To the Editor of the Literary Chronicle.*

SIR,—According to Vitruvius, three things ought to be considered in every fabric, without which no edifice will deserve to be commended; and these are, utility or convenience, duration, and beauty.

If population increase, and a desire to be instructed in the established rules of divine worship prevail, then the edifice which is now erecting in the New Road, will add much to the convenience of its local and social circle. Hence, the first thing will be accomplished, in part, though convenience is not always studied upon a general principle, the rich being more usually furnished with crimson curtains, large prayer-books, and hassocks, while the poor are only indulged with the 'hearing ear,' the standing posture, and the

avenue draught, which confirms a rheumatism or inoculates a disease. This is a hint for the architect and his associates, because the grant for the building of churches is given with a view of the poor being accommodated on a Sunday.

Duration being the second thing worthy of consideration, I make a remark or two. In Andrea Palladio's time, architecture was noble, because of its durability; exalted, from its spacious elements; and grand, on account of the vast stores of science and wealth bestowed on it. Greece, Rome, and Egypt were spots which exhibited their orders, arches, flights of steps, staircases, pillars, and masonries, to the most elevated and sublime conceptions, suitable for sepulture, festive honours, victorious celebrations, baths, holy ablutions, and the most sacred consecrations of their mystic or more simple devotions. In this country, Wren's name is immortal, for his works are erected as specimens of immortality, the essence of duration. But it is not fashionable for modern architects to study a guide of so recent a period as Wren; and, therefore, churches, like Manchester calicos or Birmingham wares, are built only to suit the taste or caprice of interested and time—not eternity—serving individuals or parochial juntas. Places of worship ought to resemble the simplicity of the heart, and be dedicated wholly and solely to the Eternal Architect; but, it is evident from the exterior of this new church, what might be anticipated of its interior,—a mere superficial edifice, whose beauty will pass away with the generation of its structure, and the next century show its waste and cankered decay. Had this been the mode of building after the fire of London, when so many churches were built, into what vast expenses would the parishes of London now be thrown; but, fortunately for the epoch of 1821, it was otherwise.

I do not object to ornament and decoration where it arises from a pure cause, and is used to add to excellence; sculpture and painting, emanating from skilful pencils and discriminating chisels, are the very graces of religion; but I do object, most strongly, against churches, either exteriorly or interiorly, having the air, in part, of theatrical illusion. But, to my third point;—it is very difficult yet to speak of the beauty of this new church. Viewed afar, it appears that it will maintain its command at a respectful

distance from its sister saints and brethren of all denominations, from the Small-Pox Hospital to St. Paul's. As yet, it looks a very slight superstructure, and evinces an ornamental fancy, which, as I have previously hinted, will accord with the lighter fancies of the new-road and square-worshippers. An idea struck me, and forcibly too, of an unfortunate association. I mean the shell-work over the altar-end of the church; it looks as a caricature likeness of our esteemed monarch, or the host which a Catholic priest holds up to his congregation at mass. I speak it with reverence and regret, because I fear it will give room for worse construction and allusion than what I unwillingly make, and before the church befinished might be removed for a more unequivocal device.

Peals of bells being excluded from our new churches or chapels of *ease*, ringers will, in course of years, like *old grandsires*, become extinct. This I am sorry for, good ringing being a healthful exercise, and of later periods full of harmony and deep science in numbers. It is very pleasant too, on royal occasions, public anniversaries, light-hearted weddings, and liberal exhibitions of joy, to hear their playfulness dissolve in air.

ABACO.

P. S. The house, however elegant, previously to the erecting of the above church, which stands by its side, must be removed, whatever convenience and expense will be sacrificed.

#### STATISTICS OF PARIS.

THE Compte Chabrol Prefect of the department of the Seine, has recently published a work from official documents, containing some interesting particulars on the state of Paris. The following extracts will afford a curious comparison with the state of London:—

On the 1st of January, 1819, there were registered in Paris, 1171 cabriolets de place (on the stand), of which 765 were for the streets and 406 for the environs.

106 Messageries and voitures for fixed destinations, not included in those for the vicinity of Paris.

489 Coaches of remise.

318 Cabriolets, ditto.

4804 Private cabriolets.

9080 Carts.

495 Voitures à tonneau, drawn by one horse.

843 Ditto, ditto, drawn by hand.

Of private voitures, drawn by two or

more horses, not subject to take a number, the administration can give no precise account.

1600 Horses are generally kept in Paris, exclusive of those brought thither by strangers.

An eighth part of the paving of Paris is renewed annually, during seven months of the best season.

The streets, bridges, and public squares are lighted by 4553 lanterns, which consume annually 608,397 lbs. of oil.

In the public establishments, 482 lanterns consume 31,734 lbs. of oil.

The ordinary watering and clearing of the streets is done by the inhabitants; that of the bridges, quays, gates, and squares, employs from the 1st March to the 31st October 110 men; and during the other four months 250 men.

The clearing away of dust, &c. during eight months, requires 140 men and 210 horses; in the winter months, 220 men are required, and 330 horses.

The corn market can contain 400,000 sacks.

In ordinary years, there are consumed in Paris,—

718,000 Hectolites of wine, including about 450,000 bottles (13,968,842 wine gallons).  
24,950 Ditto of cider (659,154 wine gallons).  
77,000 Ditto of beer (2,034,263 wine gallons).  
13,600 Ditto of vinegar (359,298 wine gallons).

71,750 Bullocks.	251,000 Capons or poulets.
8,500 Cows.	549,000 Turkeys.
76,500 Calves.	328,000 Geese.
339,650 Sheep.	131,000 Partridges.
70,500 Hogs.	177,000 Rabbits.
931,000 Pigeons.	174,000 Ducks.
	29,000 Hares.
1,289,000 Chickens.	

Butter and eggs cost annually 10,348,800 francs.

Oysters cost 599,600 francs.

Sea-fish, 3,417,600 francs.

Fresh water fish, 333,400 francs.

The receipts of the twelve theatres, including the Cirque Olympique, may be valued, one year with another, at 5,500,000 francs, of which they give 500,000 for the use of the poor.

10,000 persons daily frequent the Spectacles, of whom 7000 pay, and 3000 have free admissions.

The receipt of the minor spectacles, balls, gardens, concerts, coffee-houses, à soirées amusantes, curiosities, &c. may be estimated at 1,000,000 francs, of which 100,000 go to the poor.

So that public amusements produce above 6,000,000 francs, which is above 16,000 per day, not including the expense of refreshments and of gaming, which pay separately.

## THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

THE population of Great Britain, at the census in 1811, was 11,800,000, exclusive of the army and navy, then about 500,000. From the returns, so far as published, under the present census, it appears, the increase is about 15 per cent. This will make the population of Great Britain at present to be 14,000,000 of souls. Ireland contains about 6,500,000 people, making the population of the British dominions in Europe 20,500,000. The population of our North American possessions cannot be less than 1,500,000; the population of the West Indian colonies, 900,000; Africa about 130,000; in the Mediterranean, 150,000; colonies and dependencies in Asia, 2,040,000; and in our extensive territories in the East Indies, perhaps 70,000,000 of souls. The whole population of the British empire will, at that rate, contain 95,220,000 of souls.—The Russian, the next highest in the scale of civilized nations, contains 50,000,000; France, 30,000,000; and Austria an equal number. The Roman empire, in all its glory, contained 120,000,000, one half of whom were slaves. When we compare its situation with that of the British empire, in power, wealth, resources, and industry; the arts, sciences, commerce, and agriculture, the preponderence of the latter in the scale of nations and of empires, is great and most remarkable. The tonnage employed in the merchant service is about 2,640,000 tons, for Great Britain; the exports, 51,000,000 (including 11,000,000 foreign and colonial); and imports, 36,000,000. The navy, during the last war, consisted of 1000 ships of war; the seamen at present in the merchant service are about 174,000: the net revenue of the state, 57,000,000 sterling. The capital of the empire contains 1,200,000 persons, the same number which Rome contained in the days of her greatest strength. The value of fixed or landed property in Great Britain, as calculated by Mr. Pitt, in 1797, was 1,600,000,000l. and it may now be fairly taken at 2,000,000,000l. The cotton manufactures of the country are immense, and reach, in the exports, to 20,000,000l. or one half of the whole. In short, taking every thing into consideration, the British empire, in power and strength, may be stated as the greatest that ever existed on earth, as it far surpasses them all in knowledge, moral character, and worth. On her dominions the

sun never sets; before his evening rays leave the spires of Quebec, his morning beams have shone three hours on Port Jackson, and while sinking from the waters of Lake Superior, his eye opens upon the mouth of the Ganges.

## REFINEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

[THE people of the United States boast a high degree of civilization, and a very fine taste for the drama; so much so that they affected to despise the splendid talents of Kean, and the journalists loaded him with abuse more befitting the purloins of St. Giles's or Billingsgate, than the editors of periodical journals. In order that our readers may judge of the weight of their pretensions, we quote, from a recent number of the *National Intelligencer*, published in the capital of the United States; the following article. Smoking and drinking spirits in a theatre have not, we believe, been known in this country for above a century and a half; and yet they are now prevalent in that transatlantic Athens—the city of Washington:—ED.

## WASHINGTON THEATRE.

IT is with much pleasure the writer of this understands that the new theatre is on the eve of being opened by a detachment of Messrs. Warren and Wood's company, from Philadelphia. A well-conducted theatre is at all times not only an evidence of public taste, but an auxiliary in behalf of the public morals, because it allures the young and the gay from amusement often fatal to character, fortune, and health. In order to answer the end intended, it is absolutely essential that a rigid internal police be established for the purpose of preserving order and decorum in the audience. Anxious that this should be attained, I beg leave to recommend that the managers, or whoever have the superintendance of the performances, establish and enforce something like the following regulations.—Without something of the kind, all theatres are bear-gardens, instead of places of polite recreation:—

1st. No person to be allowed to smoke within the walls of the theatre during the play nights. This will add to the security of the building by taking away one cause of fire.

2nd. No person allowed to sell intoxicating liquors within the walls of the theatre, a tavern being near, where they can drink and smoke without offending decency or annoying ladies.

3rd. No person, on any pretence, allowed to stand up on the box-benches, or cover them with dirt, and impede the sight of others.

Ladies who come without a proper attendant, to be confined to the upper row; and on no occasion, to be suffered to intrude into the lower boxes.

5th. If any gentleman choose to talk loud, quarrel, or fight, they are to retire to some spot where they cannot disturb the audience.—The watch-house or penitentiary is a very convenient place.

6th. All tipsy gentlemen to be positively refused admittance, unless they will promise to go quietly to sleep in a corner of a box.

7th. No actor shall presume to give additional point or force to an equivocal passage or 'double entendre,' by either leering, winking, or the like, upon pain of being hissed off the stage.

With these or similar rules, a theatre may be made a school of refinement, elegance, and morality. Without them it is but a rendezvous for vulgar profligates, men without shame, and women without virtue. Should my worthy old friend Wood think proper to attend to these hints, he will see me and my family frequently at the theatre. But he will certainly not see us if my wife and daughters are to sit down where fashionable bucks have just had their feet, and, for aught I know, by the side of a prostitute, and be smoked with tobacco, while their ears are assailed by the ribaldry of half bred gentlemen, who have no other way of attracting notice except by making themselves offensive.

## A FATHER OF A FAMILY.

N. B. Two or three resolute peace officers, acting as door and box-keepers, will be sufficient for all the purposes of order and decorum.—*National Intelligencer*.

## Original Poetry.

## A PRAISE OF POESY.

'Oh Poesy, for thee I hold my pen,  
That am not yet a glorious denizen  
Of thy wide heaven.'—KEATS.

WHAT hand shall imp my wings in their free flight  
From this low earth to an immortal height,  
Till I have travelled up within the reach  
And bearing of heaven's minstrels—till their speech  
Sounds audible, and near as mine own voice?  
And who breathe words of blame at my fond choice?

Be thou my guide—thou, heaven-taught Poesy,  
And fit my spirit for discovery  
Of unknown worlds of thought! Teach me  
to shape

Thy course aright, that I may touch some cape  
Shall be unreached by any bark but mine,  
And I will laud thee long with many a hymn divine.

Yet there are some (oh shamelessness!) who slight

Thee, Poesy, and care not in thy sight  
To be found gracious; who full lightly weigh  
Thy glorious gift to few as one that may  
All easily be won; but soulless shapes are these,

Earth grovellers and grubs—creatures without knees,

Who cannot worship wisdom, yet will stoop  
Lower than lilies when in death they droop,  
So they may grasp the gold that is their bane;  
And these shall be as they had never been,  
Whatever now their undeserved degrees  
In worldly honours, precedence, and fame,—  
Forgotten in the memory of Time their name,  
And vain and wretched doings. Beneath thy fane,

Divinest Poesy, I would be found  
A worshipper. Let not thy mysteries astound  
My feeble sense; but lend me a clear light,  
To lead my spirit, if it err, aright!  
So will I honour thee with every rite  
Which graceful poets use in praise, and prove  
Not undeserving of thy dearer love.

Ye who have never heard her voice, nor tasted  
The wine of Helicon; ye who have wasted  
Long nights in fruitless orisons to her,  
And, for she listened not your feeble prayer  
For inspiration, hate her from despair  
That she will ne'er instruct your souls to breathe

A lyric hymn for great Apollo's hearing,  
Or teach your hands one coronal to wreath,  
Worthy the honour of Apollo's wearing,  
Despise her not—for she of holy Heaven  
Was born and taught; it may not be forgiven!

Her brow is crowned with glory, and its ringlets  
Are golden yellow, and brighter than the winglets

Of rainbow-tinted dove, and beautiful  
As those thin-streaming threads the gossamer  
Lets loose unto the many-winded air,  
To thrall the fays who come at dusk, to cull  
The violet's dew, to bathe Titania fair.

Wild creatures tame at her meek innocent look,

And play about her feet as summer brook  
Plays round the lilies which, like Dian's maids,  
Lave their white limbs in the cool-watered shade.

The fiery lion will crouch down in meekness,  
While her hand smooths his rough mane to the sleekness\*

Of her own golden hair and silken lashes;  
And yet her eye sometimes its anger flashes,  
When fools deny her wisdom, and despise  
Her revelations and deep mysteries.

Who that beholds her may refrain adoring,  
When sunward-looking as an eagle soaring,  
She holds divine communion with the skies,  
And walks the uncertain waters as they rush  
Upon their headlong course, who suddenly hush  
At her smooth song, mellifluous as the lay  
Piped by the early-stirring birds, when Day  
Comes grandly in his car; or that at noon  
Of night thick-warbled to the moon,  
Walking in loveliness, and silently  
Sorrowing, to see Eudymion lie,

Cold to love, with slumber-sealed eye.  
And she is fair as that pale nightly rover;  
Tender as Venus of her wounded lover;  
Harmless as Love when Psyche hid his arrows;  
Gentle as Lelia fondling tame sparrows;

\* Poesy and Music are here considered as one and the same.

Sweet-voiced as whispered words of passionate wooers;

Quiet as murmuring of those happy covers,  
The amorous doves; soothing as the bee's  
Faint drowsy hum, when nestling on a flower,  
And surfeiting on sweetness. The loitering breeze,

That whispers with the leaves in lady's bower,  
Is noisy in its stillness to't. 'Twill be  
Awhile more ravishing than airs of Italy;  
Then audible and lofty as discharge

Of the thunder-clouds, when at some mountain-targe

Their crushing bolt is levelled; then terrible,  
Being moved, as the deep groan of painful hell,

The roar of raving seas, or boisterous breath  
Of the storm-wind, which speaks the wrath of death.

Ah, how may I by my rough lines express  
Her grace, her meekness, and sweet winningness;

And how repeat the music of her sighs,  
Which scarce would wait the light down when it lies,

Windfallen, upon a motionless flower's head;  
How tell one thing that she hath done or said;

How paint her eloquent look; and the bright meaning

Of her sweet smile, that cheers one like the greening

Of the spring meadows, seen through melting snows;

How tell the kindliness, the sweet dispose,  
The sympathy withal, of her fine heart,  
That weeps for sorrow of another's woe,  
And smarts for pity of another's smart;

How tell in sandy deserts if she roam,  
Trees burst in bowers, drest in May's sweet bloom;

And sudden as shot stars, flowers from verdant beds

Spring up alert with youth, and bow their heads,

Like worshipping Persians at their god's new rise,

Doing her homage in most reverent wise;  
And waters at her wish, as Eden's sheen,

About her feet gush coolingly, and run

Like beamy light new bursting from the sun;

And nothing else but beauty soon is seen,  
Where freshness, fragrance, and green life had never been.

The lowly and the mean her still small whispering

Voice have heard in loneliness, much wondering

Whence such sweet sounds might come. The noblest men

Of the o'erpass'd time, like meek aw'd children,

Have sat attentive to her high discourse,  
That drew their souls from earth to where her song had source.

And hope-fed spirits have unwearied kept  
Long lonely vigils, while the unthought slept,

Waiting and watching her approach. Their feet  
Have tracked her to her secretest retreat,

And trod where none but poets dare to tread.

The crown that circled sacredly each bead

By her bestowed, by her was gather'd

From heaven's immortal bowers these angels wreathed

And fragrant made, for on them they had breathed.

Oh! great reward of their ambitious toil,  
That labour might not weary—danger foil,  
These men are deathless now—eternal heirs  
Of an eternal heritage; and their's

An ever-during crown of gems and gold,  
And orient glory. Oh! might proud kings be told

Of these rich crowns, that nor unrest nor pain  
Cost them that wear, nor seas of blood to gain,  
Nor kingdoms wreck and ravage to maintain,  
Sure they would meek and lowly grow, and spurn

Their bubble sceptre of a day, and yearn  
To pass the portal of a poet's grave,  
So they might win a wise renown, and have  
Their deaths lamented, and a hallow'd name  
Synonymous with virtue—old as fame;  
Then, durable as the stars, their holy names  
Would live in heaven, when the hot smothering flames

Of its volcanic bosom have calcined  
This poor, and proud, and perishable world,  
With all its quenchless waters, gathered and curled,  
And dried like shrivelled scrolls, and to the wind

In ashes from the Almighty hand loose hurl'd.

Then mock not poetry. Oh! to be dumb,  
Tongueless, and mouth-shut as the silent tomb,  
Were better than such babbling! The stern and rude

Inhabiter of rudest climes is learned  
In this most learned lore. 'Tis understood  
Of wisdom, and hath had his praise—not earned

Easily, nor oft. Believe it is the soul's  
Untutor'd language, which pedantry controls  
No more than doth the wind the giant sea,  
Who most opposed is strongest, and speaks most angrily.

Oh, evereloquent poesy! wreather  
Of fair and deathless flowers—continual breather

Of songs which never die—I now inspire  
To tell, in smiling verse, of when thy lyre  
Was heard in heaven, how the stern godhead smiled

At its new voice, and by it was beguil'd  
Of his just wrath against that sinful twain  
From Paradise out-driven, never again  
To wander their birth-bower. How, swift as thought,

The princeliest angels, soon as their ears caught  
Its fainting fallings, fluttered fast around,  
And drank its vast varieties of sound  
In silence solemn wrapt, and listening,  
And on thy voice as on th' Almighty's hung.  
How Gabriel awhile did stand astound,  
His earnest eyes with a mixed rapture glistening,—

(Excessive rapture, sister to sad Pain,) Till, with a gentle glance of self-disdain,  
Far down into the depths of space he flung  
That startling trumpet, which had frequent rung  
Alarm through farthest heaven, when angels warred

Madly and wickedly with their liege Lord;  
But were soon quailed, and conquered to be spared,

And Justice's sword suddenly sheathed as bared;  
How him, rebellious then, since God exiled,  
Melted in ruth, and, like a toward child,  
Stood pride-subdued and weeping, was forgiv'n;

And with heaven's shouts the clouds shook under heaven,

And the huge hearth, with its surrounding sea,  
Roll'd in its trembling orbit giddily.

'Twas then, proud Poesy, that tears like rain  
(The first by angels wept, and not for pain,  
But joy,) watered the everlasting throne.  
That day is yet a jubilee. 'Tis known

The souls of God's and nature's poets\* then  
Were framed—the pride of heaven, and thee,  
and men !

These high and holy themes may not be sung  
By harp faint-voiced as mine, and loosely  
strung.

O, pardon my mad spirit, which would dare  
To soar thy giddy heights, and beat the air  
That swims serene round heaven with wings  
profane!

And pardon my rash tongue, too weak and vain  
To win thy judging ear ! I did but rave  
Like to a petted child, for things I may not  
have.

My soul is fever'd with its restless rage,  
And thirsts for glory, which will ne'er assuage  
Till a full-gushing rill, fresh from the clean  
Sweet fount of Helicon, flow coolingly between  
Me and my green resolve, and medicine  
My warring mind to peace, now nothing spent  
With its determined toil ; nor shall it rest  
With indolent ease on her calm couch, content  
To live with her, and do as should her guest,  
Till Fame's own crown is won and safe pos-  
sess'd.

Ere this great gain be mine, much I must moil,  
And waste the sap of youth with midnight oil,  
Working unseen, uncheered, as miners toil,  
Yet come at last in presence of the sun,  
And show the labours they untak'd have done,  
By the all-buying wealth which they have won.  
So I must labour in the muses' mines,  
And delve for wit—the diamond that shines  
Brilliantly ever ; and thought—the golden ore  
That maketh the soul rich. Oh ! never more  
Shall my soul faint in its brave task ; but I,  
Like warrior doomed, who knoweth he must  
die

In-th' imminent breach, yet enters gallantly,  
Will wage this hopeful, doubtful, studious  
strife,  
That works out fame eterne, but wears out life.

1817.

C. W.

### The Drama.

**DRURY LANE.**—*Geraldi Duval*, the *Coronation*, and *Monsieur Tonson*, still reign at this theatre, and still bring good houses. On two or three evenings lately, the pit has been so crowded, that upwards of two hundred persons got upon the platform leading across it to the stage, and were only prevailed upon to quit it by being accommodated with room in the upper boxes. The *Coronation* has now been exhibited fifty successive evenings, a circumstance almost unprecedented in this age of spectacle. Weary as we are of the monotony which prevails at this theatre, we are happy to find that some novelties are forthcoming, among which are a new comedy; and report adds, a grand spectacle, in which forty horses will be introduced on the stage, representing the principal events of his Majesty's visit to Ireland. This is a somewhat questionable subject; and when we consider that a piece founded

\* Milton and Shakespeare.

upon it was condemned the first night at Astley's, (where it is very unusual to damn any piece,) we hope Mr. El-liston will pause before he incurs so heavy an expense as it must necessarily create. We do not hear any thing of Mr. Kean's engagement at this theatre, for the season; indeed, at present, there is nothing for him to do. Mr. Wallack, we understand, has gone to America. Munden, it is said, has renewed his engagement with Mr. Elliston. We are glad of it, for these are not the times in which we can spare him from the stage.

**COVENT GARDEN.**—Farquhar's excellent comedy of the *Beaux Stratagem*, was performed at this theatre on Friday night, when Mr. Drinkwater Meadows made his first appearance on the London boards, in the character of Scrub. Mr. Meadows is the son of a comic performer, who was for many years a great favourite in the northern counties; he is young, well made, and has an expressive countenance. With these qualifications, and others of a higher cast,—a good knowledge of the stage, and a correct conception of his character, he played the part of Scrub with great success. Unlike too many of our modern comedians, (and tragedians too,) he does not seek to create effect by artificial means, but trusts to a faithful portrait of his author; grimace forms no part of his acting, which is chaste without tame ness, and humourous without extravagance. His rustic imitations of Archer were admirable, and close even to minuteness; but the scene with the thieves was the best; and the manner in which he rushed in on the alarm being that 'the honest gentlemen were robbing the house,' was quite in character; and, between his efforts to huddle on his clothes, and his blustering timidity to escort the persons out, he elicited shouts of laughter and applause. The *debut* of Mr. Meadows was completely successful, and if he continues to study English comedy, and not English comedians, he will rise to the very summit of his profession; even now he is a very valuable accession to this already powerful company. Jones, in Archer, is so gay, lively, and genteel a footman, that we do not wonder that, even in the disguise of a servant, he is a great favourite with the ladies. Emery, as the Hounslow Captain, Gibbet, gave a most accurate and forcible delineation of the character; his face, figure, dress, and demeanour, all combined to

give fidelity to the portrait. Mr. Abbott, in Aimwell, made a polite and gallant beau; and Connor's Foigard is one of his best characters. His unruffled firmness, when, in a brogue that would betray him to all the world, he declared himself to be a French priest, was highly ludicrous. Yates, with all his artificial stuffing, made but a very indifferent Boniface; the rich humour and joviality of this prince of publicans is not to be conveyed or expressed by a mere unwieldiness of person, though Mr. Yates seemed to think that therein lay the powerful merit. Blanchard, (though no man has less sullenness in his character,) played the character of Sullen to the life. Mrs. Davison presented an excellent picture of his discontented lady. Mrs. Davenport did all that Lady Bountiful had to do, as well as it could be done; and Miss Foote was charming in Cherry. We wish we could speak favourably of Miss Beaumont, in Dorinda; but really, a pretty person and a pretty voice are all the pretty things we can say about her. The comedy, thus strongly cast and ably supported in all its principal characters, with its own intrinsic merits, could not fail of ensuring much applause, which it certainly obtained.

On Wednesday night, the opera of *Rob Roy Macgregor* attracted a very crowded and elegant audience. During the absence of Mr. Macready from town, the part of Rob Roy was sustained by Mr. Yates, who seems to be a sort of dramatic at-all, or actor of all work. This gentleman is not without some talents, but they are not to be found in such characters as 'the Macgregor,' and we are sorry he does not consult his theatrical reputation more than to attempt them. Miss Hallande appeared, for the first time, as Diana Vernon, and added new claims to that approbation which she had previously obtained. Liston, as the Baillie Nicol Jarvie, in appearing for the first time this season, was most heartily welcomed. The rich humour which Liston throws into this character, makes it one of the most attractive in the opera, and it is a treat of which we never get weary. There was no novelty in the cast of the remaining characters, which are all familiar to the public.

**HAYMARKET THEATRE.**—The manager of this theatre 'holds on the even tenor of his way,' in giving us either popular new pieces or good old comedies. The genuine—the legitimate drama reigns at this theatre, and reigns

successfully amid all the spectacular attractions of larger houses. Whether the taste for the drama may or may not be on the decline, we will not pretend to determine, but we were always of the opinion (and the success of this house confirms it) that the legitimate drama, if performed in theatres of proper dimensions, would insure patronage enough to render it ultimately more advantageous to the proprietors of theatres than the splendid pageants which they exhibit at so much expense. We might say something of the difference between encouraging a taste for the genuine drama, and vitiating it, but that would have little influence where money-making is the sole object of theatrical speculation.

On Tuesday night, the comedy of *The Jealous Wife* was performed, for the first time at the New Haymarket Theatre. The character of Mrs. Oakley, a finished picture of female weakness and want of temper, was sustained with great force and effect by Mrs. Johnson. She developed the alarming progress of jealousy, from the little leaven of suspicion to the tortures of conviction, with fearful reality. Her over-bearing rage, impatience of control, and fretfulness of disposition, were given with all the force and truth of nature. Mr. Conway, though not so good an Oakley as we have seen, played the character very respectably. Terry, as his brother, the Major, taught him how to 'rule a wife' with great confidence, and gave full force to a bachelor's invectives against the lovely sex. De Camp's Lord Trinket was by no means good. Williams hustled through Russet pretty well, and was quite as hasty and passionate as the character required. Oxberry's Sir Harry Beagle was tolerable, but Lacy's Charles execrable. Miss Boyce very agreeably disappointed us in Lady Freelove, which she played with much discrimination; and, in the scene in which she feeds the jealousy of Mrs. Oakley, she displayed considerable ingenuity. The comedy was received with much applause by a crowded audience.

**ADELPHI THEATRE.**—This lively little theatre, which has been renovated and decorated with much taste and brilliancy of effect, opened for the season, on Monday night, with a new comic burletta, called *Capers at Canterbury*. It is a lively bustling piece, in which there was much good acting by Wrench (who is engaged at this theatre), Wilkinson, and some others of the

favourites of last season, among whom we noticed Mr. Callaghan, who, as Brian O'Boggle, is a very amusing Irishman. *Half an Hour's Courtship*, in which Mr. Watkins Burroughs is the hero of the piece, and the favourite pantomime of the *Fairy of the North Star* (which has been revived), finished the evening's amusement, much to the satisfaction of a very crowded house.

## Literature and Science.

*Bonaparte's Memoirs.*—Counts Bertrand and Montholon have stated, through the public journals, that the 'Manuscrit venu de St. Helene,' 'Des Pensées,' 'Maximes,' 'Sentences,' 'Memoires Secret,' 'Napoleon peint par lui-même,' 'Chagrins Domestiques,' 'Vers,' &c. &c. published or announced as the productions of the Emperor Napoleon, are not by him, and that his MSS. have not been communicated to any person. They also state, that the memoirs announced under their names are not by them.

*Night Clocks.*—The west dial of the Tron Church, at Glasgow, has been illuminated at night with complete success. The apparatus consists of a No. 1 Argand burner, placed a few feet out from the top of the dial, and inclosed in a nearly hemispherical lantern, the front of which is glazed. The back forms a parabolical reflector; the dial receives not only the direct, but also a conical stream of reflected rays; and is thus so brilliantly illuminated, that the hours and hands can be seen with nearly the same distinctness at a distance as during the day-time. By a simple contrivance, the clock disengages, about sun-rise, a small detent, somewhat similar to the larum in wooden clocks, which shuts the gas-cock, and so instantly extinguishes the light.

A subscription has been opened for a whole length marble statue of the late Sir Joseph Banks, to be executed by Chantrey, and to be placed in the hall of the British Museum. More than 2000l. was subscribed in a few days towards this object, which is a just tribute to the zeal of the late president of the Royal Society.

*The Latitude.*—The *Annales Maritimes* report the discovery of a new method to determine the latitude, by a single non-meridian height, deduced from two other heights, taken in a very short space of time.

Mr. Ryan, the author of the 'Worthies of Ireland,' has in the press, *Eight Ballads on the Fictions of the Ancient*

Irish, and several miscellaneous poems, and is also preparing for publication, a catalogue of works, in various languages, relative to the history, antiquities, and language of the Irish; with remarks, critical and biographical.

*Height of Mountains.*—Mr. J. G. Jackson, who has published descriptive works of Southern and Western Barbary, and who has more than once crossed the chain of Mount Atlas, has published an observation which calls for an accurate investigation. From observations made by Mr. Colebrook, in India, on the heights of Mount Himala, his calculation is that, from some of the crests of that enormous range being visible at the distance of two hundred and eleven English miles, their elevation should be twenty-eight thousand feet above the sea. Mr. Jackson has applied this rule to measure the height of certain elevated points of Atlas, on the eastern side of Morocco, which are visible at sea twenty miles from the coast, westerly, and in the direction of Mogadore. Hence it will follow that the elevation of these heights would be more than twenty-nine thousand English feet above the level of the Atlantic, and, of course, the highest on the globe, as to any known measurement.

*New Russian Voyage of Discovery:*—Early last year, the foreign journals announced an expedition fitting out by the Russian government, to explore the coasts of Siberia and Asia, and to get further information of three newly discovered islands in the Glacial Ocean\*. These islands lie opposite the mouth of the river Jana, and have received the collective name of New Siberia. A letter from Dr. Erdmann, professor in the University of Dorpt, communicates some details relative to this enterprise.

It has long been known to the neighbouring inhabitants and the hunters of Terra Firma, who had made excursions in that quarter, that there existed an unknown country which had been noticed in several maps, but its extent remained unknown, till an inhabitant

\* Accounts from Captain Billinghausen, commander in the Russian Voyage of Discovery in the Antarctic seas, (as received at Petersburgh from Botany Bay, his letter dated May, 1820,) report that he had discovered three islands covered with snow and ice, on one of which was a volcano, lat. 56° south. He announces that there is no southern continent, or should there be one, it must be inaccessible from being covered with perpetual snows, ice, &c.

of Irkutsk, named Hendenstrom, undertook a voyage to it in 1809 and 1810. He found three inhabited islands, wherein were mountains and rivers, which abounded with curious objects, and from the report he made of it, Geometer Pschienizin, of Irkutsk, undertook a similar voyage in 1811. On his return, he prepared a chart, which, however, has not yet been published, and in which these islands have been designated, the easternmost, as New Siberia, the central one, Island Fadeecoskisch, and the westerly one, Island Kessel.

Recently, two expeditions have been fitted out for a more minute examination of these islands. They proceed at first to Irkutsk, and then separate, veering about in the Glacial Ocean, to reach two different points. Each company consists of an officer of the navy, who conducts the enterprize, a physician, who is also the naturalist, a pilot, and six chosen sailors. At Irkutsk, about twenty artisans or mechanics are to join them.

The first of these companies is superintended by the Baron de Wrangell, navy-lieutenant, with an assistant in Dr. Kyber, who is the naturalist and physician. This expedition is to examine the coasts of Northern Asia, and to make search for the lands seen by Andreff. To accomplish this object, they are to proceed this year to the banks of the Kobuma, and there to construct vessels to put to sea with, next year. It is intended, at the same time, to visit Bering's Straits, and to return by the north.

The second company, conducted by Lieutenant Aujou, has Dr. Alimann (from this place): it will proceed to the banks of the Jana, thence to go and visit the islands of New Siberia. Both companies are provided with the necessary instruments. Previous to the termination of next winter, they expect to have passed the ice to repair to their destination, and their return may be looked for in three years. Considering the experience and ability of the conductors, the friends of geography and nature predict much advantage from these expeditions. The Baron de Wrangell has already sailed round the world under Commodore Krusenstern.

### The Bee.

*'Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia limant,  
Omnia nos itidem depascimus aurea dicta.'*

LUCRETIUS

Honour.—The manner of duelling

in Japan is singular. When two men of honour quarrel in that country, the party who conceives himself injured rips up his own entrails with a large knife, and presenting the instrument to his adversary, invites him to follow his example! No Japanese gentleman can decline such an invitation, for if he does not instantly plunge the knife into his own bowels, he is dishonoured for life. If such a style of duelling were to be introduced into this country 'affairs of honour' would be less common.

*Pauperism in Europe.*—Among the hundred and seventy-eight millions of individuals who inhabit Europe, there are said to be 17,900,000 beggars, or persons who subsist at the expense of the community, without contributing to its resources. In Denmark, the proportion is 5 per cent. In Holland, 14 per cent. In England, 10 percent. In Paris, there were computed, in 1813, 102,856 paupers out of 530,000. In Liverpool, 27,000 in the population of 80,000. In Amsterdam, 108,000 out of 217,000. The number of the indigent has since rather increased than diminished.

*St. Peter's Fish.*—The two dark spots a little behind its head, are supposed to have gained the *Haddock*, in days of superstition, the credit of being the fish which St. Peter caught with the tribute-money in its mouth; in proof of which, the impression of the Saint's finger and thumb has been intailed on the whole race of *Haddocks* ever since. But, 'Adhuc sub judice lis est,' as, unfortunately for the tradition, the *Haddock* is not a Mediterranean fish: nor can we suppose it to have belonged to the lake Tiberias. The truth is, the Italians consider a very different fish, as that which was sanctified by the Apostle; and which, after him, they honour with the name of *Il Janitore*; a name that we have converted into *Johnny Dory*, with the same happy ingenuity that has twisted the *girasole* or turnsol, into a *Jerusalem* artichoke.

### TO READERS & CORRESPONDENTS.

'METROPOLITAN Larks,' 'A Poetical Flight,' 'Acad,' The 'Charioteer,' and 'Long,' are inadmissible.

'Mirza, the Wanderer,' must seek a domicile elsewhere, as he cannot be admitted into the *Literary Chronicle*.

'The Maniac of the Lake' is under consideration.

The 'Orator' is not to our taste. We pity, but cannot praise him.

The favours of \*\* M., Carbon, and Veritas have been received.

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